

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1540

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: ALIANZA POPULAR VIEWS

1. CRUZ MARTINEZ ESTRUELAS, AFTER FRAGA, THE MOST IMPORTANT LEADER OF THE ALIANZA POPULAR, LUNCHEDED WITH ME ON FEBRUARY 25. HE (AND SILVA MUNOZ, ANOTHER ALIANZA LEADER WHOM I HAD SEEN EARLIER) WAS MUCH MORE BEARISH ABOUT THE ALIANZA'S ELECTORAL PROSPECTS THAN THEY HAD BEEN IN THE FIRST FLUSH OF ENTHUSIASM AFTER ITS FORMATION. MARTINEZ ESTRUELAS SAID THAT WITH SUAREZ AND THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE, THE ALIANZA HAD A HEAVY BURDEN AND COULD NOT EXPECT TO DO SO WELL. SILVA, FOR THE SAME REASONS, ESTIMATED 20-25PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE--A FAR CRY FROM THE 40PERCENT THE ALIANZA FIRST TALKED ABOUT.

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2. BOTH EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH THE CONVERSATIONS ON THE ELECTROAL LAW WITH SUAREZ. MARTINEZ ESTRUELAS SAID THAT A GOS DRAFT HAD BEEN PROMISED THEM SEVERAL TIMES BUT TO DATE ONLY QUESTIONNAIRE HAD BEEN FURNISHED. BOTH INDICATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT, IN THEIR VIEW, WELSH ON AN ALLEGED AGREEMENT FOR A

LOWER HOUSE MINIMUM OF FOUR SEATS FOR THE SMALLEST PROVINCES, PART OF THE DEAL FOR THE ALIANZA SUPPORT FOR THE POLITICAL REFORM LAW IN THE CORTES.

3. WE GATHER THE QTE UNDERSTANDING UNQTE WAS FOR THREE SEATS AND THE ISSUE TURNS ON WHETHER TO INTERPRET THAT AS A BASIC UNIT OF THREE SEAT PLUS ONE SEAT THAT WOULD BE DUE THE SMALLEST PROVINCES ON A POPULATION BASIS OR SIMPLY AS THREE SEATS. THE TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION OF COURSE WISHES TWO SEATS, WILL GRUMBLE AT THREE, AND WILL HOWL AT FOUR. SILVA HAD EVEN SUGGESTED THAT THE ALIANZA MIGHT EVEN REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS BUT THERE WAS NO HINT OF THIS IN MARTINEZ ESTRUELAS' LATER CONVERSATION.

4. BOTH EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE PROSPECT THAT SUAREZ, AFTER ALL, MIGHT RUN AS THE LEADER OF A CENTRIST ALLIANCE, WHICH THEY OBVIOUSLY VIEWED AS AN EFFORT TO DESTROY THE AP. MARTINEZ ESTRUELAS SPOKE RATHER FRANKLY ABOUT HIS DOUBTS OF THE AP'S ABILITY TO CAPTURE THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATION'S STRENGTH. HE SAID MOST NATIONAL MOVEMENT OFFICIALS IN THE SMALLER AREAS WERE DOUBLE-HATTED AND THE SAME PEOPLE WHO RAN THE MUNICIPALITIES IN QUASI-OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS. THEY WOULD BE UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON GROUNDS OF PREFERENCE TO GO ALONG WITH ANY QUASI-OFFICIAL CENTRIST TICKET. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE WERE PEOPLE IN THE MOVEMENT WHO WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE ALIANZA AND WHO WOULD VOTE THEIR CONVICTIONS, BUT THEY COULD

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NOT HOPE FOR TOO MUCH FROM THE MOVEMENT. IN FACT, MARTINEZ ESTRUELAS WANTED THE MOVEMENT TO BE DISSOLVED BEFORE ELECTIONS AND CONVERTED INTO A SPORTS AND CULTURAL MINISTRY, WHICH WOULD AT LEAST PARTIALLY RELIEVE THE PROBLEM.

5. MARTINEZ ESTRUELAS DWELT ON THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH, EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND WASN'T SURE WHAT THE COURTS WOULD DO ABOUT IT. THOUGH GENERALLY MORE MODERATE THAN USUAL, HE DID INSIST THAT PSOE'S FELIPE GONZALEZ WAS THE PUPPET OF THE PCE'S SANTIAGO CARRILLO, A STATEMENT FOR WHICH THERE IS NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER EVEN THOUGH THERE IS AMPLE ROOM FOR CONCERN ABOUT THE PSOE'S COURSE. MARTINEZ ESTRUELAS ALSO INDICATED THE MILITARY MIGHT GET RESTIVE IF THE COMMUNISTS WERE FINALLY LEGALIZED.

6. IN ALL THIS, THOUGH BOTH SIDES WOULD VIGOROUSLY DENY IT, THERE IS A CURIOUS CORRESPONDENCE OF VIEWS BETWEEN THE

ALIANZA POPULAR AND THE LEFT OPPOSITION WHO NOW SHARE THE
FEAR THAT THE GOS WILL PUT TOGETHER A MASSIVE CENTRIST
COALITION THAT WILL SINK THEIR RESPECTIVE HOPES.STABLER

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